



*Testimony in Support of*

**S.B. No. 184 (Raised) An Act Extending Through November 8, 2022, Several Changes Regarding Election Administration as a Result of Covid-19 and Concerning Eligibility to Vote by Absentee Ballot.**

**H.B. No. 5262 (Raised) An Act Revising Certain Absentee Voting Eligibility Statutes.**

*John Erlingheuser, Assoc. State Director for Advocacy & Outreach  
Government Administration and Elections Committee  
March 4, 2022*

AARP is a nonpartisan, social mission organization that advocates for individuals age 50 and older. We have a membership of 38 million nationwide and approximately 600,000 in Connecticut. We advocate at the state and federal level for the issues that matter most to older adults and their families.

Honorable Chairs, Ranking Members and members of the GAE Committee, my name is John Erlingheuser and I am the Advocacy and Community Outreach Director for AARP in Connecticut. I am also a former Registrar of Voters, having served the City of Ansonia for 16 years. The right to vote is among the most basic of all political rights. Recent elections, however, have revealed many flaws and practices that make it more difficult for citizens to vote. These include registration impediments, long lines, lack of early voting opportunities, inadequate facilities, equipment, and staff at polling places and language barriers among others.

AARP believes that policies should be enacted that encourage and promote maximum participation in the electoral process. Connecticut should adopt voter registration and voting systems and procedures that expand the range of voting choices for all residents. Two of the major policy changes that should be adopted include no-excuse absentee voting by mail and allowing early voting (including no-excuse absentee in-person voting).

S.B. 184 would extend through November 8, 2022, several changes regarding election administration as a result of COVID-19 and specify "illness" as grounds for claiming eligibility to vote by absentee ballot. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that people over 65 years of age, and those with serious health conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, and lung disease seem to be at highest risk for severe disease and even death from COVID-19 related illness. It would be critical to the health and safety of voters to continue these common-sense public health measures.

H.B. 5262 would revise certain absentee voting eligibility statutes to more closely align the language to the related state constitutional provisions dealing with absentee ballots. The state statutes are more restrictive than the constitution and these changes will allow an increase in voting options by voters – options that, over the last several elections, voters have demonstrated they want to be able to avail themselves of.

AARP appreciates the opportunity to testify. If you have any questions, please feel to contact me at 860-548-3165 or [jerlingheuser@aarp.org](mailto:jerlingheuser@aarp.org).